

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 SAM-01 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01

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O R 251257Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1405

INFO USIA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

WHITE HOUSE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 12939

WHITE HOUSE PASS NESSEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, CASC (LESLIE JACQUES)

SUBJECT: EXPULSION OF LOS ANGELES TIMES CORRESPONDENT LESLIE

1. JOINT SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAS TEJA INFORMED THE DCM SEP-
TEMBER 25 THAT THE GOI HAD DECIDED TO EXPEL LOS ANGELES TIMES
CORRESPONDENT JACQUES LESLIE. THE GROUNDS FOR EXPULSION ARE THAT
LESLIE VIOLATED CENSORSHIP ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS AND HAD BEEN
REPEATEDLY WARNED BY THE GOI. HIS LATEST VIOLATION CONCERNED A
REPORT IN WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED MOTIVES TO THE HIGH COURT FOR ITS
LATEST ACTION IN REGARD TO MRS. GANDHI'S ELECTION CASE. TEJA SAID
THE MATTER HAD BEEN TAKEN UP WITH THE LOS ANGELES TIMES BUT IT
DID NOT AGREE TO WITHDRAW LESLIE. THEREFORE, THE GOI HAD NO AL-
TERNATIVE TO EXPULSION.

2. THE DCM PROTESTED THIS GOI ACTION, SAYING IT WAS A MATTER

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OF GREAT REGRET TO THE US THAT ANOTHER US CORRESPONDENT WOULD BE

EXPelled FROM INDIA. THIS WOULD ALSO HAVE AN UNFORTUNATE EFFECT ON INDIA'S IMAGE IN THE US, PARTICULARLY COMING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING. TEJA SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE POSITION OF THE US GOVERNMENT ON THIS QUESTION.

3. THE EXPULSION FOLLOWED A LAST-MINUTE 36-HOUR EFFORT TAKEN AT TEJA'S INITIATIVE TO FIND SOME BASIS ON WHICH THE EXPULSION COULD BE AVOIDED. AS A RESULT WE HAD A NUMBER OF DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH TEJA AND MEA SPOKESMAN HAKSAR, BUT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THE ISSUE CAME DOWN TO WHETHER OR NOT THE EMBASSY WOULD AGREE TO ADVISE LESLIE THAT HE SHOULD MODERATE HIS REPORTING. THIS THE EMBASSY CATEGORICALLY REFUSED TO DO. THROUGHOUT THESE DISCUSSIONS THE EMBASSY KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH LESLIE AND MYRON BELKIND, AP CORRESPONDENT AND PRESIDENT OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH ASIA, WHO MUCH APPRECIATED THE EMBASSY'S ASSISTANCE AND FULLY AGREED ON THE POSITION IT FINALLY TOOK.

SAXBE

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